

**STATEMENT OF
PAUL BROUHA
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY CHIEF, NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM
FOREST SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**
Regarding
**H.R. 1680, KERN COUNTY LAND EXCHANGE; H.R. 1969, ARIZONA FOREST
IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999; and, H.R. 3089, SCIENTIFIC REVIEW ON THE
STATUS OF THE NORTHERN SPOTTED OWL**
Before the
**U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Resources
Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health**

October 19, 1999

MADAM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to testify on three bills: H.R. 1680, a bill "to provide for the conveyance of Forest Service property in Kern County, California, in exchange for county lands suitable for inclusion in Sequoia National Forest"; H.R. 1969, the "Arizona National Forest Improvement Act of 1999"; and H.R. 3089, "a bill to provide a comprehensive scientific review of the current conservation status of the northern spotted owl as a result of the national strategy for recovery of the species."

H.R. 1680, the "Kern County Land Exchange"

The Administration does not support H.R. 1680. However, we would support the bill if amended to address our concerns, and we are working with Congressman Thomas on those changes.

The Kern County land exchange would exchange approximately 160 acres of undeveloped timbered property and county park that Kern County owns on Greenhorn Mountain inside the Sequoia National Forest, for three parcels of National Forest land in the Kern Valley area also within the Sequoia National Forest.

The Forest Service parcels consist of an area currently under special use permit for a County Juvenile Probation Camp and State-run fish hatchery, a small parcel under permit to the County for a city park in the town of Wofford Heights, and a small parcel under permit to the County for use as a maintenance yard for its parks and recreation department.

The changes we believe are necessary include requiring an environmental assessment with public participation, require appraisals to Federal appraisal standards, requiring an equal value exchange based on fair market value, confirming the lands that would be involved, and dealing with easement concerns and concerns over the loss and replacement of a storage facility. If these concerns are adequately addressed, then we would support the bill.

H.R. 1969, the "Arizona National Forest Improvement Act of 1999"

The Administration supports H.R. 1969, a bill that provides for the conveyance of Forest Service administrative sites in Arizona, and the conveyance of land to the city of Sedona, Arizona, for a wastewater treatment facility. This legislation would allow for the sale or exchange of administrative sites on national forests in the state of Arizona; and would allow for the consolidation of existing administrative sites, or the acquisition or construction of new administrative sites.

The legislation also allows the Forest Service to convey approximately 300 acres to the City of Sedona for a wastewater treatment facility. The conveyance would be at fair market value, paid in installments with interest, over seven years. This legislation allows the Forest Service to assist the local community in its efforts to provide a wastewater treatment facility, while obtaining a fair return to the taxpayers for the disposal of national forest land.

H.R. 3089, Comprehensive Scientific Review of the Status of the Northern Spotted Owl

The legislation provides for a comprehensive scientific review of the current conservation status of the northern spotted owl. This legislation also involves the Department of the Interior. Because of the very late introduction of this bill, the Administration has not had sufficient time to analyze H.R. 3089 to form an opinion.

Summary

Madam Chairman, the Administration is working with Congressman Thomas to make changes to H.R. 1680 and would support the bill as amended to meet our concerns. The Administration supports H.R. 1969, the "Arizona National Forest Improvement Act of 1999". With regards to H.R. 3089, the Administration has not had time to analyze the bill.

This concludes my statement; I would be happy to answer any questions you and the Members of the Subcommittee might have.